

WASHINGTON D.C. – Today, the United States House of Representatives passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act by a vote of 244 to 188. Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) supported the measure. The act is an \$825 billion package of tax cuts and investments and is estimated to create 3 to 4 million new jobs.

“This was a difficult vote, and I would have written the bill differently. But this is a work in progress to jumpstart our sluggish economy,” said Costa. “Our Valley will benefit from this bill and the programs that will be funded once it is signed into law. From health care, to schools and infrastructure, we will see direct results from this bipartisan legislation.”

The bill makes important and needed investments in many different areas, ranging from law enforcement, energy, health care, education, and infrastructure. For example, California is estimated to receive \$2.8 billion in highway infrastructure investment funding, and the Valley should see around \$200 million of this money. Federal money will be invested in projects that can start within thirty days, and some local projects that are “shovel ready” are sections of Highways 168, 180, 198 and 178. The bill also contains \$350 million for the Navy and Marine Corps to provide sailor and Marine housing and child development facilities across the nation, including at Lemoore Naval Air Station. A Navy report from July 2008 reported waiting lists for child care in every installation across the nation.

Rural water and waste disposal was funded at \$1.5 billion in the bill to help communities fund drinking water and wastewater treatment systems. Delano, CA has several water treatment projects in need of funding. The bill also increases spending in Medicaid in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) Program, which is the federal government’s share in the Medicaid program. It is estimated that the bill would increase the base match by 4.9 percent, thus increasing California’s federal match to 54.9%. Costa is a strong supporter of FMAP funding.

The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration. Following a vote in the Senate, the bill will move to a conference to resolve differences, and then a final, identical version will be voted on by both chambers before heading to the president for his signature.

“It is my hope that we can improve the balance of funding for the investment in much needed infrastructure as this measure moves along,” concluded Costa.

